



Interviewing Tips

- Upon initial contact (perhaps by phone), make sure the candidate understands the basics of the position they are applying for, such as hours, compensation, responsibilities, etc. It wastes everyone's time to discover there is not a "basic" fit later.
- Prepare for the interview. We would all agree that "hiring the right person" is critical, so give the process the attention it deserves. Squeezing a candidate into your schedule and not being mentally focused on finding the "best" person for the job is shortsighted.
- Resumes and job applications should be studied carefully, as they can provide valuable insight. Pay attention to; education, specific work experience, job related training, progress in each job, stability, grammar and spelling, and phrases such as; "assisted with", "had exposure to", "knowledge of".
- During their visit / tour, make it a point to introduce them to other staff along the way. Observe these random interactions for informal insight.
- Make sure you have a current Position Description to provide them if they remain a candidate after the preliminary interview. Allow them time to briefly review it and ask questions.
- Strike a balance between "selling" Telos, and the position, and not "over promising" or "glamorizing" the opportunity. We do have a lot to offer, but be careful not to set expectations too high.
- Each final candidate should interview with multiple staff members (3-5) either in a panel setting or with sequential interviews. If separate interviews are conducted, make sure everyone is not asking the same questions over and over.
- Don't make the mistake of trying to use the job application or resume as a guide during the interview itself.
- Use the sample questions provided! Tailor them to the specific position as needed, but make sure to include many of them as the core questions. Take the list with you to the interview if needed as a reference.
- Create / prepare a list of job specific questions to add to the list. Not to be used instead of, but in addition to.
- Avoid questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no". Use open-ended questions as much as possible.
- Don't ask questions in such a way that they suggest the answers. This is currently a very common problem among our interviewers. Questions like the ones that follow suggest the answer we hope the candidate provides. (Ex. "are you comfortable multi-tasking", 'we place an emphasis on service, is this a

strength of yours”, “in this position, it’s important that …, is that something you feel you can do”).

- Use the applicant’s answers to lead to other questions.
- Limit your own talking. You can’t talk and listen at the same time.
- Concentrate. Focus your mind on what the person is saying. Shut out external distractions.
- Listen for overtones. You can learn a great deal about a people by the way they say little things, the way they react to what you say.
- Don’t argue mentally. Don’t get caught up in reacting to everything the applicant is saying / what a better answer might be, or you’ll lose track of what’s being said.
- Consider the applicants appearance, attire, mannerisms, and professionalism.
- Don’t promise anything in the employment interview that you are not sure to give (opportunities for pay increases, career growth, etc.).
- Absolutely check references. Listen to what they don’t say as much as what they do say, and ask open ended questions (not, are they dependable). Have a few questions ready before you call.

Sample Interview Questions

Opening Questions:

1. Tell us briefly about yourself.
2. Where did you grow up?
3. Why did you choose the particular college that you attend/attended?
4. What determined your choice of major?
5. What were your strongest courses in school? Weakest?
6. How did you hear about this position?
7. What prompted you to explore this specific job opportunity?
8. Please give a brief overview of your work history.
9. Why did you leave your previous position(s)?
10. What is your personal theme song?

Job-specific Questions:

1. What interests you most about this particular position?
2. What qualities do you believe are most important for this position?
3. What part of this position most concerns you, or do you feel may be the most challenging?
4. Of your previous work positions, which one have you enjoyed the most and least? Why?
5. What part of your work has given you the greatest feeling of achievement and satisfaction?
6. What part of your work have you found to be the most frustrating or unsatisfying?
7. What was are most valuable experiences you have gained in your previous positions that may help you in the future?

8. Have you ever had a work experience in which you were glad you paid attention to some particular detail? Please describe it?
9. What steps have you taken to keep informed or remain up to date in your profession?
10. Describe the procedures or systems you use to keep track of things that require your attention.
11. Under what kinds of conditions do you do your best work? Find most difficult?
12. How comfortable / experienced are you with initiating a sales process?
13. When you have found yourself in an unfamiliar social gathering with people you don't know, how do typically react?

Customer Service Questions:

1. Tell me about a time you served another (does not have to be in the work environment) in the last 30 days. How did it make them feel? How did it make you feel?
2. Please describe a time when you had to handle a difficult situation involving a customer and how it was resolved.
3. What are some general tactics you would use when handling an upset customer?
4. I'm sure you have heard the familiar phrase, "the customer is always right". Tell me your thoughts on this subject.
5. Tell me three things that you think would delight customers/members the most?
6. What is the coolest thing that has happened to you as a customer?
7. What is service?

Relating to Supervisor / Management Questions:

1. Of your previous managers, who do you admire / enjoy most and why?
2. What style of supervision / management do you respond best to?
3. In your opinion, what is the greatest thing that distinguishes a superior employee from a typical "good" employee?
4. Give me an example of a time you found it necessary to make an exception to the rules in order to get something done.
5. Describe a work related problem you had to face recently. How did you deal with it?
6. Give me an example of a time you did more than was required in your previous job(s).
7. How do you determine which activities should have top priorities on your time?
8. What do you think you can bring/add to our organization?

Character Questions:

1. If I were to contact your previous employers/mentors, how would they describe you?
2. If I would contact a former teammate (sport, job, etc), how would they describe you as a teammate?
3. What is the best / most constructive piece of criticism you have received and how has it affected you?
4. What characteristic strength do you have, that when used in excess, could become a weakness?

5. What was the toughest decision you had to make in the past year? What made it so difficult?
6. Can you recall a significant personal or professional event in your life that has had major influence on who you are today?
7. What are some things you have done to differentiate your performance from others performing a similar role?
8. If you had a personal set of Core Values, what would they be?
9. Have you ever observed a fellow employee doing something inappropriate or against company policy? What action did you take?
10. What personal performance standards do you set for yourself?
11. What do you enjoy doing with your free time? On weekends, etc.?
12. Tell me about your career goals, short and long term.
13. If you had a personal Board of Directors, to help guide major decisions in your life, who might be on the Board and why?
14. Who are your heroes? Why?
15. Why would anyone do more than necessary?
16. What don't you want to be doing five years from now?
17. What would you say is the biggest misperception people have of you?
18. If you had an unlimited bank account what would you spend it on?

Closing Questions:

1. Do you have any questions for us?
2. Is there anything else you would like to share that we have not yet covered?
3. As you might expect, we are looking for the best person possible for this position. In a closing summary, would you tell us why you would be our best choice?